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SUBJECT: ICITAP EXPOSES TURKMENISTAN'S LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS TO
U.S. TECHNIQUES

1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

2. (U) SUMMARY: For the first time, law-enforcement officers from all five of Turkmenistan's provinces plus Ashgabat gathered for a Department of Justice International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) training course on crime scene processing. (COMMENT: UNODC has also organized similar training in the past. END COMMENT.) The two ICITAP instructors were pleased by the officers' enthusiasm to learn new forensics techniques. On their evaluation forms, most participants deemed the training a success but asked to include more practical exercises in the future.

The ICITAP team suggested other areas for cooperation, including donations of expendable equipment, expanded English-language training, and more law-enforcement training. In fact, there is so much work to do in Turkmenistan that it may be time to consider assigning a Ministry of Justice legal attache or an INL officer to Embassy Ashgabat. END SUMMARY.

3. (U) During the December 10-21 ICITAP course, two crime scene investigators exposed 25 law enforcement officials from all five provinces in Turkmenistan plus Ashgabat to international law enforcement forensic techniques. This was the first time that many of the students, some recently graduated from the Police Academy, had seen demonstrations of these techniques. Topics covered included securing a scene, crime scene photography, fingerprinting and fingerprint analysis, bloodstain patterns and bloodstain analysis, sketching, DNA, footwear and impression evidence, and firearms and toolmarks.

STUDENTS EAGER FOR IMPROVED INVESTIGATION TECHNIQUES

4. (U) The instructors observed that the students were attentive, engaged, and eager to learn. After the first day, they began to feel more comfortable and asked many questions. The instructors staged practical crime scene exercises in and outside of the hotel where the classes took place and covered all the steps of documenting and investigating a crime scene. The instructors noted that the students did not seem comfortable with crime scene

investigations at first. Since Turkmen officers do not have equipment -- such as cameras -- necessary to document, local crime scene investigators must have two witnesses at a crime scene in order to collect evidence. The ICITAP instructors said that the students learned during hands-on exercises how methodically to process a crime scene, and learned to take excellent photographs.

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATORS AND ANALYSTS MUST WORK TOGETHER

¶15. (U) The instructors also said that the students felt that it was not necessary to understand the principles of fingerprint identification because "other people" from Turkmenistan's Criminal Research Center (CRC) departments analyze fingerprints. However, the investigators told the students that they needed some basic training in forensic sciences to better understand how to help the fingerprint analysis experts. On the same note, the instructors were disappointed that no CRC personnel took part in this training, because the investigators on the ground needed to have a more in-depth understanding of laboratory work to be of greater assistance to the labs.

CONSISTENCY IS A CONSISTENT ISSUE

¶16. (U) The ICITAP instructor team recommended that this group of students return in the spring for additional training to build on what they learned in this course. They also recommended providing instruction to Ministry of Interior Police Academy trainers to improve training techniques at the most fundamental level. ICITAP also noted that the lack of personnel consistency at the Criminal Research Center -- turnover of the director -- also seems to be a problem.

LEARNING SKILLS IMPORTANT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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¶17. (U) The instructors were concerned that no CRC personnel are enrolled in this term's English Language Training (ELT) course, a project the embassy jointly sponsors with the British Embassy. CRC personnel need to speak English to read professional forensic journals. They also need to have the ability to read instruction manuals in order to utilize ICITAP-donated lab equipment to its maximum potential and to maintain it. A knowledge of English would also help these personnel integrate into the international forensic community.

¶18. (U) ICITAP will send two Criminal Research Center personnel to the American Association of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) meeting in February in Washington, D.C., and possibly also to the next international forensics meeting in New Orleans. CRC Director Shirmamedov thanked ICITAP for providing training and equipment to his laboratory and credited ICITAP with making his laboratory one of the best-equipped in Central Asia.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS: SUPPLIES

¶19. (U) When asked for recommendations, the ICITAP instructors said that Turkmenistan's law-enforcement agencies could use expendables used in running the donated equipment, such as ink jet cartridges, magnetic wands, fingerprint powder, and supplies used to replenish the mobile crime scene processing vans. They also recommended the donation to the provinces of cameras for documenting crime scenes. The instructors emphasized the need for more training and suggested working with Turkmenistan's Police Academy to incorporate some of the training into its curriculum.

TURKMEN BEGIN TO INVEST IN THEMSELVES: A GOOD SIGN

¶10. (U) The ICITAP instructors noted that an underfunded forensics laboratory and law-enforcement sector in the Soviet system stretched the Turkmen capacity for activity and action. However, ICITAP is encouraged that Turkmenistan is showing a commitment to making improvements by spending its own money, rather than relying exclusively on foreign donations.

¶11. (U) COMMENT: We welcome the spring visit of the ICITAP

trainers and look forward to exploring their ideas on training Academy trainers. Given the opportunity for closer cooperation, it might be time to assign a Department of Justice legal attache, or an INL officer to Embassy Ashgabat. As an area for engagement with the government of Turkmenistan, law enforcement is a growth industry, and there is plenty to do. The relationship would only benefit and grow from this permanent, dedicated presence. END COMMENT.